

Subject: re helping romanies

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30 october 2001

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Councillor A Philip Hendry CBE,

Bedfordshire County Council,
Cauldwell street Bedford.

Mr Hendry sir,

I write regarding your letter dated (26 sept2001) which you wrote to Michael Shearsby, in which you state (All of us perhaps would like to live life as our ancestors did in years gone by but rules Laws and regulations in many instances forbid us.) Perhaps you could tell me which rules Laws and regulations does not allow people to live there Ethnic life style.

I as a Romany am concerned that there are rules, Laws, regulations, that forbid me to live life as I choose, and as my ancestors chose before me. It is very worrying to me as a Romany to have this threat over my head, denying me my Heritage as a Romany in this way, Is this not nothing more than a glorified Ethnic cleansing on the part of Bedfordshire County Council, to deny me this right.

The right to live as I choose, the Human right to freedom of choice, so does this sort of denial not breach my HUMAN RIGHTS as a Romany to follow my Romany ancestral Heritage and travel the land in freedom.

You go on to say (Travellers who have no respect for private property and cause considerable damage and expense to private property owners cannot be justified in views of the Bedfordshire County Council.)

Your solution to this is to deny us the right to live and travel, what would you have us do, where would you have us go, pray do tell me your solution to us and our problems.

Will you also treat everyone in the County the same way if they are accused of causing damage to private property and have no respect for private property owners,

will they also be made to move and be made homeless. If so then Bedfordshire will have a lot of homeless people in it, with no where to go, unless you have a pre-thought out solution and it can cater for a large chunk Bedfordshire.

I as a Romany am proud of my Ethnic Romany life style and value my right to freedom and equal rights.

Mr Hendry you as Council leader should be looking at the problems of the Romanies with a view to helping us, not dictating how we should live.

I care about my Romany people and the unfair and unjust treatment they have to endure, we Romanies are part of this Country and have travelled for centuries and will continue to do so and no one has the right to take that away from us, least of all Bedfordshire County Council.

We Romanies are in dire need of homes and that can be solved by building more Council sites and transit sites of which there is none in Bedfordshire and very few in England as a whole, also by earmarking ground with a view to developing it for Romanies.

There is a need for more privately owned sites, that can be run by Romany for Romany, Mr Hendry it is because of ignorance of us Romanies, remarks like the ones you have made are said in the first place, so let us put understanding where there is this ignorance and help solve this problem together.

We need to meet and discuss this together and so by doing you will have a better understanding of us Romanies and our way of life, with a view to helping the Romany people to obtain their fair and equal rights.

We Romanies have a more colourful life style and it is to be looked on in admiration on our part that we care about Ethnic Heritage and so fight wholeheartedly to preserve and protect it, if people and more importantly Bedfordshire County Council showed us understanding and compassion regarding our problems, of having somewhere to live and more importantly supported and helped us Romanies, then life would be a lot easier for us and our families, also problems concerning Romanys could be looked on with a view to solving them not adding to them.

We are Romanies and yes an Ethnic race but we are also people and more importantly to Bedfordshire County Council, we are people of there County part of the community, also we therefore should be looked on by Bedfordshire Council as a problem they have and are helping to keep by the Councils lack of help on their part.

The ten year structure plan is out and know is the time to act and set aside land for us Romanies for sites and transit sites, land to buy and build homes for Romanies my people to live on.

So I say again let us meet and talk with a view to ending this unhappy situation regarding Roma and build a positive relationship regarding Roma and the Council.

I would like to view the Bedfordshire Council consultation policy regarding Romanies, to see what you have done, are doing regarding Romanies so far.

Mr Hendry sir, you will find by talking with me I am a normal person, I just happen to be Romany but I will listen to your views and solutions you may have to offer, if you will also listen to ours and together with a new knowledge and understanding of the we can perhaps find a solution to a very large and pressing problem the Council have regarding us the Romanies land to live on and the lack of it.

I await your reply in kind regards, Jane Codona, NA GWB.

National Association of Gipsy Women in Bedfordshire.

Who with my husband Clifford are founders of NTAG,

National Travellers Action Group

Working together to help Romanies to obtain fair treatment and equal rights for all.

yours faithfully,

Jane Codona.